DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Washington, D.C. 20420

August 12, 2013

Director (00/21PF)   In Reply Refer To: 21PF
VA Regional Offices and Centers   Fast Letter 13-19

ATTN: All Veterans Service Center and Pension Management Center Personnel

SUBJ: Procedures for Updating Veterans Service Organization Access — Up-Front
Pension Eligibility Verification

Purpose

This letter provides procedures for updating MAP-D access to certain pension-related
end products (EPs) for VA-accredited representatives of VA-recognized Veterans
service organizations (VSOs).

Issue

Pension and Fiduciary (P&F) Service is implementing a new system for verifying
pension eligibility, the "up-front verification" initiative. Because the initiative uses federal
tax information (FTI), which has special security requirements, VSO representatives
who use VBA computer systems must complete mandatory training and request that
VBA update their access.

Background

The up-front verification initiative is a data-sharing collaboration between the Internal
Revenue Service (IRS), Social Security Administration (SSA), and VA. When fully
implemented, IRS and SSA will provide income information electronically through VBA
systems. Pension Management Centers (PMCs) will use the data to verify income of
applicants for pension and parent's dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC)
claims.

By providing VBA with the capability to verify the income of pension applicants at the
time of application, the initiative will reduce pension overpayments, preserve the
pension program for those Veterans and survivors with genuine need, and allow P&F
Service to implement a post-award auditing program in lieu of the current Income
Verification Match program.

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When the initiative is fully implemented, VBA will store FTI obtained from IRS and SSA in three VBA applications: a restricted-access Share tab, a restricted-access MAP-D site, and a restricted-access Virtual VA folder. Because MAP-D access can only be restricted by EP, VBA will restrict access to the following pension-related EPs in MAP-D: 120, 147(parents' DIC only), 150, 180, and 190. VSOs will have access to FTI in VBA systems only through MAP-D.
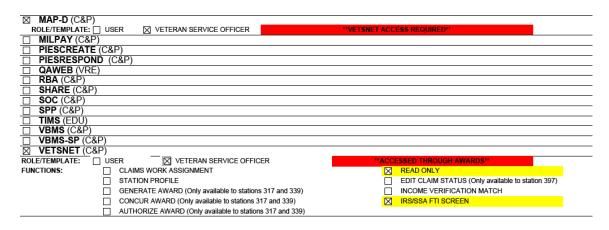
How will up-front verification affect VSO representatives' system access?

When VBA implements the new access measures, VSO representatives who currently have access in MAP-D for all types of claims will no longer have access in MAP-D to the following pension-related EPs: 120, 147 (parents' DIC only), 150, 180, and 190. Representatives who wish to retain access to these EPs must complete the IRS-mandated FTI training and request access to the restricted information via CSEM (or current local access request procedures). Representatives will retain pre-existing access to other VBA systems and records and non-pension MAP-D EPs.

Procedures

1. <u>Accredited VSO Representatives</u>. VSO representatives who need access to pension-related EPs in MAP-D for purposes of representation must complete the FTI training (Curriculum VBA-419 (*Safeguarding Federal Tax Information (FTI)* - TMS ID 384768)). VSOs should complete this training as soon as possible, and, after completing the training, request that VA update their MAP-D access through normal channels no later than August 16, 2013. Until VA updates their MAP-D access, VSOs will not have access in MAP-D to the above-identified EPs.

   VSO's MAP-D access can be updated in CSEM by selecting MAP-D and VETSNET (READ ONLY and IRS-SSA FTI SCREEN) as indicated below:

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2. <u>Regional Office Training Managers</u>. Curriculum VBA-419 (*Safeguarding Federal Tax Information (FTI)* - TMS ID 384768) is available to assign FTI training to accredited representatives of recognized VSOs. Training Managers should assign this course to representatives within their domain by putting the <u>user ID of the representative</u> in the existing classes in their domain for FTI training. Once the Training Manager has added the representative, the system will assign the lesson overnight. Representatives should complete the FTI training as soon as possible, and before requesting access.

3. <u>Regional Office Information Security Officers (ISOs)</u>. ISOs should review and concur on VSO representatives' requests for access to MAP-D as described above as soon as possible, but before August 22, 2013. Before granting access, ISOs must verify that the VSO representative has completed the required FTI training: Curriculum VBA-419 (*Safeguarding Federal Tax Information (FTI)* - TMS ID 384768).

4. Enclosed with this letter are responses to frequently asked questions regarding the up-front verification initiative.

Questions

Send questions regarding this letter to P&F Service at <u>VAVBAWAS/CO/PMC</u>.

/S/

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Director
Pension and Fiduciary Service

Enclosure